

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A smoke- and water-vapor-permeable food casing ~~made of mixture based on polyamide or copolyamide, which is~~ impregnated with liquid smoke on the food-facing side, wherein the casing comprises a) at least one aliphatic polyamide and/or aliphatic copolyamide and b) at least one thermoplastic other polymer or copolymer, wherein the thermoplastic other polymer or copolymer is hydrophilic.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) The food casing of claim 1, wherein it is tubular, ~~preferably~~ seamless.

Claim 3. (Cancelled)

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1 [[3]], wherein the polyamide or copolyamide is polycaprolactam (nylon 6), polyhexamethylenedipamide (nylon 6,6), or polyblend or random copolyamide of nylon 6 and nylon 66 (nylon 6/6,6), nylon 11, nylon 12, polytetramethylenedipamide (nylon 4,6), nylon 6,10, a copolyamide of  $\epsilon$ -caprolactam and  $\omega$ -lauro lactam (nylon 6,12), a copolyamide of nylon 6 or a nylon 12 (nylon 6/12).

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1 [[3]], wherein the polyamide or copolyamide forms therein a coherent phase.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1 [[3]], wherein the fraction of the component a) in each case based on the total weight of the mixture is 40 to 90 % by weight.

Claim 7. (Cancelled)

Claim 8. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1 [[3]], wherein the component b) is a water-soluble organic polymer which swells under the action of water or water vapor.

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1 ~~[[3]]~~, wherein the fraction of the component b) ~~[[,]]~~ in each case based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture, is 10 to 60 % by weight.

Claim 10. (Previously Presented) The food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic mixture additionally contains at least one organic or inorganic filler.

Claim 11. (Previously Presented) The food casing as claimed in claim 10, wherein the inorganic filler comprises quartz powder, titanium dioxide, talcum, mica and other aluminosilicates, glass staple fibers and other mineral fibers and/or glass microspheres.

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 10, wherein the organic filler is a polysaccharide, ~~preferably starch, cellulose, exo-polysaccharides and/or a polysaccharide derivative, preferably crosslinked starch, starch ester, cellulose ester or ether or carboxyalkylcellulose ether.~~

Claim 13. (Previously Presented) The food casing as claimed in claim 10, wherein the fraction of the filler, in each case based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture is not greater than 40 % by weight.

Claim 14. (Previously Presented) The food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein its water vapor permeability (WVP), determined as specified in DIN 53 122, with air impinging the casing on a single side at 23°C and at a relative humidity of 85 %, is at least 30 g/m<sup>2</sup>d.

Claim 15. (Previously Presented) The food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein it is multilayered.

Claim 16. (Previously Presented) The food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein it is biaxially stretched and heat set.

Claim 17. (Previously Presented) The food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the liquid smoke is an acidic liquid smoke.

Claim 18. (Previously Presented) The food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein it is in shirred form.

Claim 19. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a smoked food in a water-vapor- and smoke-permeable tubular casing having the steps

- providing a ready-to-stuff tubular casing based on polyamide,
- stuffing the casing with a food, ~~preferably sausage emulsion, in particular with raw sausage emulsion,~~
- closing the casing and
- storing the stuffed casing,

which comprises the polyamide-based casing being a casing as claimed in claim 1.

Claim 20. (Currently Amended) The ~~use of~~ food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the food casing contains a for smoked sausage product products or smoked cheese.

Claim 21. (New) The food casing as claimed in claim 2, wherein it is seamless.

Claim 22. (New) The food casing as claimed in claim 12, wherein the polysaccharide is starch, cellulose, exo-polysaccharides, a polysaccharide derivative, crosslinked starch, starch ester, cellulose ester, cellulose ether, or carboxyalkylcellulose ether.

Claim 23. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein the food is sausage emulsion or raw sausage emulsion.